

# Interviews

by Tara Connolly

So, you have turned in your resume or application and received a call for an interview. Don't panic. An employment interview is simply a meeting between you and a potential employer to discuss your qualifications and see if there is a "fit". It is your responsibility to convince the employer that you are the one for the job.

Preparation is the key to your interview success. **Before the interview:**

- ▶ **Research the company.** Look at their Web site, if they have one. Doing your homework shows your interest and can impress the interviewer. One easy place to find a list of virtually every employer in the state of Utah is FirmFind:  
<http://jobs.utah.gov/firmfind>
- ▶ **Gather any documents you might need.** These could include copies of your resume, driver's license, school transcripts, certificates etc. Be sure to bring a pen and paper, in case you need to write anything down.
- ▶ **Plan your answers to commonly asked questions.** Think about your skills and the job's requirements, and know how they match up.
- ▶ **Dress a step above what you would be wearing on the job.** It may sound old-fashioned, but a neat, professional, polished appearance is always best for a job interview.
- ▶ **Arrive a few minutes early.**
- ▶ **Turn off your cell phone or pager.**



## The Interview

- ▶ Shake hands with the interviewer. A firm (not bone-crushing) handshake will do.
- ▶ Look the interviewer in the eye and smile. Show you are confident and excited to be there.
- ▶ Sit up straight and keep your hands still. Be aware of your nonverbal body language; don't put your hands in your pockets, crack your knuckles, tap a pen or pencil, jingle keys or play with your hair.

### Questions to Expect During an Interview

- What is it about this job that appeals to you?
  - Why did you leave your last job?
  - What are your greatest strengths?
  - What are your biggest weaknesses?
  - Why should we hire you?
- ▶ Listen carefully and respond positively and honestly. Focus on your qualifications and what you can bring to the job.
  - ▶ Always answer the question that is asked. Don't ramble or go off on a tangent.

# Behavioral Interviews

Have you ever gotten the interview question, "Give me an example of a time when..." This is a behavioral interview question. These questions are based on the premise that the best way to predict future behavior is to determine how you acted in the past. Examples of these types of questions are:

"Give me an example of time when you dealt with an upset customer and how you resolved the situation."

"Describe a major problem you have faced and how you dealt with it."

The initial question may be followed up with:

"What did you do?"

"What did you say?"

"What was the result?"

The key to answering behavioral questions is to give specific examples of things that really happened. Not just, "Well if that happened, I would do this..." It needs to be, "In the past I have done this..." Recall situations that show favorable actions or behaviors and show you in a positive light. Focus on situations that show your work ethic, customer service or teamwork skills, ability to solve problems and leadership abilities. Be sure your story has a beginning, middle and end. Be specific.



## Questions to Ask



At the end of the interview, the employer may ask you, "Do you have any questions for me?" Many job seekers make the mistake of asking questions that focus on their needs and wants. Your questions should be work-focused, task-focused or function-focused. Here are some examples:

### Good Questions

What would my primary responsibilities be?  
Who would I be reporting to?  
What type of training would I receive?  
What are the advancement opportunities?

### Bad Questions

How much am I going to get paid?  
How soon could I take a day off?  
Are you going to check my references?  
Do I have to pass a drug test?

Save questions about what you'll get until after you've received a firm job offer.

## On the Web

<http://jobs.utah.gov/jobseeker/guides/interview.asp>

[www.bls.gov/oco/oco20045.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oco/oco20045.htm)

[www.job-interview.net](http://www.job-interview.net)

[www.collegegrad.com/intv/](http://www.collegegrad.com/intv/)

<http://content.monster.com/jobinfo/interview>

[www.collegerecruiter.com/pages/articles/article35.htm](http://www.collegerecruiter.com/pages/articles/article35.htm)